



# NASA Procedural Requirements

**NPR 3451.1**

Effective Date: May 07, 1999

Expiration Date: November  
07, 2006**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**[Printable Format \(PDF\)](#)

---

## Subject: NASA Awards and Recognition Program

**Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management**

[| TOC](#) | [Preface](#) | [Chapter1](#) | [Chapter2](#) | [AppendixA](#) | [AppendixB](#) | [AppendixC](#) | [AppendixD](#) |  
[AppendixE](#) | [AppendixF](#) | [ALL](#) |

---

## Chapter 2. NASA Honor Awards Program

---

### 2.1 Background

2.1.1. NASA's most prestigious honor awards are approved by the Administrator and presented to a number of carefully selected individuals and groups of individuals, both Government and non-Government, who have distinguished themselves by making outstanding contributions to the Agency's mission. Recognition should be extended to deserving candidates from NASA's total workforce. Incumbents of all occupational groups and all grade levels are eligible in accordance with the individual award criteria.

2.1.2. NASA employees and employees of other Federal agencies may be nominated for the Distinguished Service, Outstanding Leadership, Exceptional Achievement, Exceptional Service, Exceptional Scientific Achievement, Exceptional Engineering Achievement, Equal Employment Opportunity, Exceptional Bravery, and Space Flight Medals, and the Group Achievement Awards. Certificates of Appreciation may also be granted. For this purpose, Jet Propulsion Laboratory employees are treated as NASA employees.

2.1.3. Non-Government personnel may be nominated for the Distinguished Public Service, Exceptional Scientific Achievement, Exceptional Engineering Achievement, Public Service, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Exceptional Bravery Medals, and the Public Service Group Achievement or Group Achievement Award, as appropriate.

### 2.2 Description of NASA Honor Awards

2.2.1. Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) - Is awarded to any person in the Federal service who, by distinguished service, ability, or courage, has personally made a contribution representing substantial progress to the NASA mission in the interest of the United States. The contribution must be so extraordinary that other forms of recognition by NASA would be inadequate. This is the highest honor that NASA confers.

2.2.2. Distinguished Public Service Medal (DPSM) - Is awarded to any individual who is not an employee of the Federal Government or was not a Government employee during the period in which the service was performed. The award is granted only to individuals whose distinguished accomplishments contributed substantially to the NASA mission. The contribution must be so extraordinary that other forms of recognition by NASA would be inadequate. This is the highest honor that NASA confers on a non-Government individual.

2.2.3. Outstanding Leadership Medal (OLM) - Is awarded for notably outstanding leadership that has had a pronounced effect upon the technical or administrative programs of NASA. The leadership award may be given for an act of leadership or for sustained contributions based on an individual's effectiveness as a leader, the productivity of the individual's program, or demonstrated ability to develop the administrative or technical talents of other employees.

2.2.4. Exceptional Achievement Medal (EAM) - Is awarded for a significant, specific accomplishment or contribution clearly characterized by a substantial and significant improvement in operations, efficiency, service, financial savings, science, or technology that contributes to the mission of NASA.

2.2.5. Exceptional Service Medal (ESM) - Is awarded for significant, sustained performance characterized by unusual initiative or creative ability that clearly demonstrates substantial improvements or contributions in engineering, aeronautics, space flight, administration, support, or space-related endeavors that contribute to the mission of NASA.

2.2.6. Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal (ESAM) - Is awarded for an unusually significant scientific contribution toward achievement of the NASA mission. This award may be given for individual efforts that have resulted in a contribution of fundamental importance in this field or have significantly enhanced understanding of this field.

2.2.6.1. Accomplishments are far above others in quality or excellence--a rare, outstanding, clearly superior achievement.

2.2.6.2. This is a prestigious scientific award for specific/concrete scientific achievement(s).

2.2.6.3. More credit will be given for recent contribution(s) (except in unusual circumstances when a contribution was overlooked at the time it occurred).

2.2.7. Exceptional Engineering Achievement Award (EEAM) - Is awarded for unusually significant engineering contributions toward achievement of the NASA mission. This award may be given for individual efforts or application of engineering principles/methods that have resulted in a contribution of fundamental importance in this field or have significantly enhanced understanding of this field.

2.2.7.1. Accomplishments are far above others in quality, scope, and impact.

2.2.7.2. Accomplishments are explicit, demonstrate results, and are perceived as outstanding or significant by peers and impacted targeted groups.

2.2.7.3. More credit will be given for recent contribution(s) (except in unusual circumstances when a contribution was overlooked at the time it occurred).

2.2.8. Equal Employment Opportunity Medal (EEOM) - Is awarded for outstanding achievement and material contribution to the goals of NASA's Equal Employment Opportunity programs either within Government or within community organizations or groups.

2.2.8.1. Accomplishments are clearly superior in quality, scope, and impact.

2.2.8.2. Accomplishments are explicit, demonstrate results, and are perceived as outstanding or significant by peers and impacted target groups.

2.2.8.3. More credit will be given for recent contribution(s) (except in unusual circumstances when a contribution was overlooked at the time it occurred).

2.2.9. Exceptional Bravery Medal (EBM) - Is awarded for exemplary and courageous handling of an emergency by an individual who, independent of personal danger, has acted to prevent the loss of human life or Government property.

2.2.10. Public Service Medal (PSM) - Is awarded to any individual who was not a Government employee during the period in which the service was performed. The award is granted for exceptional contributions to the mission of NASA.

2.2.11. Space Flight Medal (SFM) - Is awarded to STS flight crewmembers (civil and military astronauts, mission specialists, payload specialists, civilians) to recognize individual participation in a Space Transportation System (STS) flight mission. The medal is granted for participation in initial flight. NASA Space Flight Cluster is awarded for subsequent flight(s).

2.2.12. Group Achievement Award - Is an award given in recognition of an outstanding accomplishment which has been made through the coordination of many individual efforts and has contributed substantially to the accomplishment of the NASA mission. This award may be used to recognize the accomplishments of either a group of Government employees or to a group comprised of both Government and non-Government personnel as a team award.

2.2.12.1. Groups should be identified and nominated at the lowest level possible to ensure, as a minimum, recognition of true working teams and/or homogenous performance.

2.2.12.2. Individuals who have made significant, noteworthy contributions should be included, and those whose contributions or associations are brief, peripheral, or limited should not be included.

2.2.12.3. Groups should have participated in programs or projects that were particularly significant to NASA, not routine events.

2.2.13. Public Service Group Achievement Award - Is an award given to a group of non-Government employees in

recognition of an outstanding accomplishment that has contributed substantially to the NASA mission.

2.2.13.1. Groups should be identified and nominated at the lowest level possible to ensure, as a minimum, recognition of true working teams and/or homogeneous performance.

2.2.13.2. Individuals who have made significant, noteworthy contributions should be included, and those whose contributions or associations are brief, peripheral, or limited should not be included.

2.2.13.3. Groups should have participated in programs or projects that were particularly significant to NASA, not routine events.

2.2.14. Certificate of Appreciation - is awarded in recognition of outstanding accomplishment that has contributed substantially to the mission of NASA.

| [TOC](#) | [Preface](#) | [Chapter1](#) | [Chapter2](#) | [AppendixA](#) | [AppendixB](#) | [AppendixC](#) |  
[AppendixD](#) | [AppendixE](#) | [AppendixF](#) | [ALL](#) |

| [NODIS Library](#) | [Human Resources and Personnel\(3000s\)](#) | [Search](#) |

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
**NODIS**

---

**This Document Is Uncontrolled When Printed.**

Check the NASA Online Directives Information System (NODIS) Library  
to Verify that this is the correct version before use: <http://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov>

---